1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

PREGNANCY AND BIRTH

843 [759] The villagers believe that pregnancy lasts ten lunar months and is signalled by the initial interruption of the menstrual cycle. It is rare for a village woman to see a doctor at all during her pregnancy. The villagers consider it unnecessary and say that only the rich people go to a doctor. Even though there is a government-run health center in the [743] *hsiang* which offers some pre-natal care, modesty prevents village women from visiting the clinic although the excuse they give is that they do not have the time.

The expectant mother receives no special care during pregnancy; she eats no special foods and goes about her household and field tasks as usual. The women fear that if they eat special foods the baby may get too big and that the delivery will be difficult and dangerous. They [292] wear no special maternity clothes, but wear either larger and fuller skirts or leave the top buttons of their regular skirts open. During the last month of pregnancy and the first month and a half after the birth, the parents abstain from sexual intercourse. This, the villagers explain, is for the protection of the mother's health.

844 759 178 Today, most village women employ a midwife at the birth of their first child. Midwives first began to be used about twenty years ago, but "then it was only rich people." The regular use of a midwife by ordinary villagers has been common only since the postwar period or the late 1940's. It is interesting that one of the important advantages of having a midwife, according to a group of village women, is that "If [217] we call a midwife, it is easier to register the baby in the Hsiang Public Office since the midwife will then write out the certificate of birth. Othewise a birth certificate must be obtained through the village mayor."

Previously, the older women of the family delivered all babies. Today, these same women may be present to assist the midwife at the time a first child is born, and they usually assist in the delivery of subsequent children when a midwife has not been called. The husband is not present when his wife gives birth.

844 759 465 The midwife who works at the Pu Yen Hsiang Health Center is usually called to Hsin Hsing village. She has been trained by attending several classes for midwives. "She charges NT $30–40 [about US $1] for a normal delivery, or more if she has to give an injection to stop excessive bleeding." The midwife makes two house visits, one at the time of the birth and the second when she washes the baby on the third day after the birth. When the child is born, the midwife applies [757] a silver nitrate solution to the eyes only if it appears that there might be something wrong.

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5

The birth takes place in the bedroom of the house, usually with little illumination available. Sometimes only one small electric bulb or a kerosene lamp is lit. In labor and during the birth, the woman seems to be relatively quiet, refraining from cries of pain. This may result from the usual stoicism of Chinese women, who are trained to show as little emotion as possible no matter how great the pain. To have other people hear any cries would be embarrassing, and thus cries are avoided. 844 • [373]

A woman must not give birth to a child in her natal home. It is believed that such a birth would bring bad luck to her brothers' wives when they give birth and might even result in their being unable to have children. In one case, the married daughter of a Hsin Hsing landlord family did not get on well with her husband's parents. After a number of years of marriage she returned to live in her parents' home while her husband worked in the city and occasionally visited her. When it came time for her to give birth to her third child, she had to leave her brother's home and go to a hospital to have the baby, a most unusual occurrence in the village. She could not give birth in a neighbor's house, of course, since this might damage the birth prospects of the women of that house. 844 842 784 602

After the birth, according to a custom whose reason and origin are now unknown, the umbilical cord and afterbirth are wrapped in a rag and buried in the river bottom. Anything related to the birth, especially if it has been in contact with the woman's blood, is considered unclean.[1] The very room in which the birth takes place is likewise considered unclean, and anyone who enters the room for a month after the birth cannot then attend a wedding, since this would mean bad luck for the bride. 844 [826]

The baby is fed "sugar water" (sugar boiled in water) immediately after birth and until nursing begins. The baby begins to nurse about the end of the second or third day, when lactation begins. 853

After the birth, the new mother eats with the family at the next regular meal, and there is no change in her meal schedule. The food she eats, however, is special, and often consists of fresh fish, chicken, wine, and other such "good and rich foods." These are felt to encourage the production of milk and, more important, to help the mother regain her strength. These foods are usually gifts sent during the first month by the new mother's brothers and sisters. Neighbors and friends may also send such gifts, and the household of the new mother gives them "oil rice" (fried glutinous rice) in return. 846 262 431

It is felt that the new mother should do as little work as possible and rest frequently during the first month after the birth. If she belongs to a joint or stem family, this period of rest is virtually assured. If, however, the family is small, she must depend upon help from *ch'in tsu*, 846 [596] [612]

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Taiwan AD6

The district police office as well as the local officials in the district Public Office will also assume this function on an unofficial basis.

Chapter 6: Personal Relationships and Cooperation Within and Beyond the Village

[1] Some villagers even approached me with the hope that I might act as their leader. Because of their insistence, I did participate in a very minor way. The minimal participation, however, yielded extremely valuable insights into village interpersonal relationships. Also, after this occasion, I found most villagers much more willing to aid me in my research. For a more detailed discussion of my involvement in this case and the consequences to my field work, see my "A Case for Intervention in the Field."

[2] Several villagers also insisted that I be part of Hsin Hsing village's delegation. This turned out to be my only opportunity to attend any kind of mediation session.

Chapter 7: Life History of the Villager

[1] A woman's menstrual blood is also considered unclean, and a wash amah employed in a Chinese household is not expected to wash the mistress's undergarments if they have been stained with menstrual blood.

[2] This figure is based on the Chinese calculation of age. A child is said to be one year old at the time of his birth and two years old on the first Chinese New Year after his birth. This boy is therefore fourteen or fifteen by Western calculations.

[3] A somewhat similar kind of arrangement is reported by Robert J. Smith (1956:77–78) for Japan.

[4] If a woman dies before she bears a child or before a child is adopted into the family, her name is not recorded on the family ancestral tablet because she lacks descendants to worship her.

[5] In some instances when a family does not have daughters of their own they may take a "recognized daughter" (or a "recognized son") who in a sense is temporarily adopted and who will then come to mourn and worship at the funeral of her "recognized parents." The girl is usually the daughter of close family friends, and she will still worship her own parents. Sometimes a family may also give their girl as a recognized daughter if she is a sickly child and a fortune-teller recommends such action to avoid further illness.

Chapter 8: Religion and Magic in Hsin Hsing Village

[1] During 1957–1958 government troops were billeted in the temple and at the same time were renovating it.

[2] The belief in the ubiquity of Matsu's powers, however, is not universal among the Taiwanese. Norma Diamond, an anthropologist working in southern Taiwan in 1980–1981, has told me that Matsu is not considered

121 general, may be relatively close or relatively distant to each other on the continuum. Traditional should also not imply stagnation for no village we visited in Taiwan was not extensively changed during the past twenty-five years. Easily contrasted factors distinguishing traditional from modern included housing types, extensiveness of material goods such as television sets, motorcycles, and sewing machines, changes in occupational structure, average level of formal education, and types of health practices. The traditional village was one which had changed relatively little in the last twenty-five years; the modern village was one which had changed considerably. I will illus-
121 trate with one concrete example. In the traditional vil-
108 lage, mid-wives attended at births which have usually
844 been in the home; in the modern village, most women went by bus to a Western-style clinic in town which was staffed with doctors, mid-wives and nurses.

121 Personal factors not directly relevant to the research design also influenced selection of the village: we would have to be accepted and locate housing. These two conditions did not prove to be problems since every site that approached reasonable congruence with the other above requirements would have seemingly made out entry easy.

122 Finally, I traveled with my family which included two school-age children. Since we planned on a residence

757 a variety of different traditional and modern medicines hanging on the walls in houses. People use what they desire and when the salesman returns he replaces missing items and charges for them although there is no charge if none have been used. Different salesmen provide different combinations of drugs. There are 134 such medicine bags distributed among 59 of the 66 village households.

758 Health care has greatly improved in recent years. People go to a doctor much more often than previously. A contributing stimulus is the care received by miners and their families under health insurance programs. A Western-style doctor, a Mainland army officer, started a part-time practice in a rented room in Erhlei two months before we left Taiwan. Sanlei has a mid-wife responsible for most births. However, in the past five years, a few women in the village have traveled to the hospital in Hsin Tien after the onset of labor, usually returning about four hours after birth. Births in a hospital are common among the women living in Erhlei. The half-hour ride on the bouncing bus with a laboring woman is sometimes most exciting, especially if she has already given birth to several children. On more than one occasion, a woman in labor has gotten on the bus and had the baby during the one hour round trip without ever getting off.

758 844

262 The final factor contributing to improved health and longer life is diet. Fish and pork consumption is at

842 Almost everyone agrees that a couple should have the first child as soon after marriage as possible and I found no married childless couples employing birth control measures. It is proper to continue having children until the 833 first grand-child is born. Although it is expected that 842 intercourse will continue as long as physically possible, a couple who continues to have children after they have become grandparents will experience much ridicule.

Pregnancy and Birth

843 Pregnancy and birth are periods of anxiety in every 844 society for they are physically dangerous for mother and child alike since either may die. There may be a spontaneous abortion or defective children may be born. Consequently, almost everywhere, special ritual is required with respect to various aspects of the period of pregnancy.

Seemingly, in Sanlei, some of the ritual or belief is supported by modern medical discoveries, i.e. certain food requirements such as increased consumption of meat and eggs for expectant mothers is medically sound. The origins of other customs are lost in antiquity. It has been posited in another context that certain proximate events were often interpreted to have spurious causal connections (Carroll, 1963:5). In any case, there is a great host of Chinese beliefs connected with pregnancy and birth with attendant rituals and avoidances which are exceeded in number only by those related to death.

and moreover, since a woman typically is pregnant for a period of time before becoming aware, the bedrooms of potentially fertile women are seldom cleaned. The only truly safe period is 30 days after a child is born, the morning before intercourse is resumed. If Tai Shen is inadvertently offended, which can be detected through a sharp pain in the abdomen at the time of the disturbing activity, it is necessary to call in a shaman to pacify him. Because of Tai Shen it is necessary that parturition take place in the regular bedroom.

An interesting change in this belief about Tai Shen is related to modern medical practices emanating out of a small public hospital in Hsin Tien which provides a doctor for child birth. The mines provide the families of workers with medical insurance and many miner's wives are therefore having babies in the hospital, fairly common in Erhlei but still rare in Sanlei. Twenty years ago, it was impossible to discover the hiding place of Tai Shen but today, religious specialists are able to detect his hiding place so the object in which he is hiding can be taken to the hospital in Hsin Tien with the woman in labor.

There is a whole host of other taboos for the pregnant woman: tying strings in her bedroom will effect the baby's fingers: using scissors, the ears: needles, the eyes, etc. Funerals are likely to cause miscarriages. Wedding ceremonies are also off limits because the belief in hsi

843 chung hsi (good counteracts good) means that either the mother or the newlyweds will likely suffer harm. There are many other such strictures but almost any lapses may be counteracted by the activities of a shaman.

[842] As previously stated, it is hoped the first child will be a boy and boys will continue to be desired following the first child until the desired number is acquired. There are rituals to change the sex of the unborn child from female to male, some performed by the family and others by specialists, but villagers do not believe them very effective. It is also possible to detect the sex by various means such as computations involving the mother's age and month of conception.

844 Most births in the village are attended by a local unlicensed midwife with the assistance of a few older women while men are excluded. A woman should not make much noise during birth as everyone lives crowded together and loud crying or screaming would be disturbing. Herbs have been consumed monthly commencing the third month with more added as the expected delivery date nears. Women give birth while lying down on their backs.

[843]

The new baby is wiped with sesame oil and a cloth soaked in salt water is used to clean his mouth followed by sugar water. Eye drops are irregularly used, increasing now in frequency but still only half the time for they cost extra. The baby is wrapped in a cloth and placed next to

844 the mother. The afterbirth is usually buried in or next to
[MM] the river but many villagers preserve the umbilical cord for
846 good luck. Nursing will commence within one to three days,
853 as soon as lactation commences, and to aid its beginning, the breast is periodically massaged. Before the first suckle, the nipples are washed with rice porridge and green onions.

846 In Sanlei Ts'un, the mother will now have one month
[262] for recuperation, tso yueh. It starts soon after birth with rich foods such as eggs in sesame oil with wine and heavily sweetened orange peel soup and the rest of the month her food is unusually rich with great emphasis on chicken. During this month, she does few of her regular chores and is confined to the house where she can neither bathe nor use salt. Other women in the family do the work; the two most likely aides are mother-in-law and mother. Neighbors often assist as for example, the daily wash is usually done by the group with whom the new mother normally washes in Sanlei. Having a boy is considered much more exhausting than having a girl and therefore, less will be expected of the mother of a boy.

851 Three days after birth, the fact is reported to the family ancestors by an older female member of the family and the natal home of the mother will be notified, if they have not yet heard. For some girls who were adopted and later married out, both natal and adopted families will be advised. Gifts may be sent back.